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# Fat Dilutes Der Spiegel's Acid

**There's Less Muckraking in Prosperity  
But Magazine Has Become a Power  
Among 5 Million West Germans**

By Anatole Shub

Washington Post Foreign Service

**H**AMBURG—Der Spiegel, writes the 83-year-old German philosopher Karl Jaspers in a new book, "is perhaps the first periodical in West Germany that has become an independent power factor.

"It brings events to light which one does not learn otherwise. In rigorously conducted interviews, it shows the men of the day, what they think and how they argue. It permits contradictions within itself, for it is in search, not possession, of truth . . .

"Der Spiegel has become a great critical magazine of opposition, independent of both outside money and advertisers, an essential factor in public education toward empirical and independent judgment."

Only an embittered minority of West Germans today would disagree with this verdict, which in itself is a remarkable tribute to Spiegel's influence. For not so long ago, Spiegel was being denounced in Bonn as communistic, in East Berlin as part of the imperialist conspiracy, by churchmen as atheistic, by trade unions as anti-labor.

## The 'Spiegel Affair'

**I**NDEED, ONLY 3½ years ago, on Nov. 7, 1962, aging Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was telling the Bundestag that Spiegel "systematically promotes high treason in order to make money." That, of course, was at the height of the "Spiegel Affair," which began with the arrest of publisher Rudolph Augstein and a dozen colleagues and ultimately put an end to the Adenauer era.

The affair was a dramatic climax and turning point, yet was only a single incident in nearly 20 years of Spiegel's continuous disregard for the powers that be in West Germany. Augstein's very first issue, sponsored by the British military occupation, led off with an attack on the British government by London publisher Victor Gollancz.

Since those days, the editorial crew of half a dozen has expanded into a staff of some 120 editors, writers and correspondents and a new 10-story building is planned to house their operations. The huge, multilingual Spiegel archive has become so formidable that archfoe Franz-Josef Strauss refers to it sourly as today's Gestapo file.

With a circulation nearing 700,000 (more than half a million of it from newsstands), Spiegel is read by more than five million West Germans, including three out of eight high school graduates and even higher percentages of university men, managers and officials. With net advertising revenues of nearly \$10 million annually, each Monday's issue gets fatter and fatter; last week's ran 182 pages.

In basic format, Spiegel still resembles the American news magazines on which it was originally modeled. But in content and spirit, in essential impulse, it is radically different, though both friends and critics have been saying for years that it has "gone tame."

There is some basis for the charge. As the magazine has thickened, the old muckraking space has been replaced by space with improved foreign correspondence, expanded cultural coverage,

manners and morals, sociology and sheer entertainment.

Circulation has virtually doubled since 1960, partly because a pair of new editors, Claus Jacobi and Johannes K. Engel, along with senior political writer Conrad Ahlers, have placed increasing emphasis on journalistic pro-



Rudolf Augstein . . . "It's hopeless."

## Augstein Considering 'Losing' Opinion Mag

Washington Post Foreign Service

**H**AMBURG — Spiegel publisher Rudolf Augstein is one of the few famous press lords who has yet to attempt a sister publication. There was a project in the works six years ago, but Augstein's partners backed out.

Now that Augstein personally controls 75 per cent of Der Spiegel, he is toying with the idea of a new, strictly political opinion weekly, to be edited in West Berlin by the latest generation of "Angry Young Men." The tentative name is Heute (Today) and the maximum ultimate circulation envisaged is 50,000.

"A sure money loser," says Spiegel manager Hans Detlev Becker, "but we think the country needs it."

professionalism and superior reporting rather than ideology. At the same time, as general manager Hans Detlev Becker concedes ruefully, "most of our old targets, from Adenauer on down, are played out hasbeens."

Nevertheless, although the acid may be diluted and comes in rarer doses, Spiegel continues to be by far the richest, often the only, source of unpleasant facts about the German political, economic and cultural establishment. (Where else would one learn, with photos to prove it, that Bundesbank president Karl Blessing had been a stalwart member of the "Friends of Heinrich Himmler"?)

Many consider Spiegel "the only real opposition left" to the growing consensus, and its concerns these days go far beyond Bonn. An American lecturing here recently on Vietnam found most of the audience questions to be clearly on a Spiegel cover story (exhaustive and finely balanced) and an Augstein column (brilliant and hostile).

### Best 'Letters' Pages

**A**LTHOUGH MOST of its articles are unsigned, Spiegel largely avoids the anonymous, homogenized flavor of some older news magazines. In addition to the famous interviews, it features perhaps the best letters to the editor pages in the world (running 15 columns last week), book reviews by distinguished outsiders and lengthy extracts from books published around the world.

Some of this material might have appeared elsewhere in Germany. Yet only Spiegel would have printed such taboo-stirring works as Guenter Loewy's "The Catholic Church and the Third Reich," Alexander Werth's "Russia at War," Hungarian Marxist George Lukacs' gloomy appraisal of German history or American critic

Joel Carmichael's heretical theories on Spiegel," too, when novelist Heinrich Boell, reviewing the Adenauer memoirs, declared: "In 20 years the Christian Democrats have succeeded in destroying Christianity for this country while the Social Democrats have destroyed socialism . . ."

"Spiegel and I are not always identical," Augstein says, and this is becoming truer every year as the magazine takes on a professional life of its own. Nevertheless, it is Augstein who has made Spiegel different and who continues to give it its distinctive note: sassy, irreverent, "agin."

### Pungent, Muscular Prose

**T**HERE IS, first of all, his own writing—sometimes only a page or two of crisp, mordant comment, yet often a long, thoroughly researched, keenly argued study which invites the description "definitive." Lately, too, there have been the "yellow pages" unillustrated texts, for the happy few, of Augstein's debates with leading politicians. While professors of Germanistics deplore the corruption of the language by "Spiegel style," there is grudging admiration for Augstein's own pungent, muscular Hochdeutsch prose.

At 43, the slight, sandy-haired Augstein remains more a shirtsleeved boy editor and star debater than a millionaire press lord. He is still excited, provoked and amused by the news, frequently goes out on interviews himself and personally uncovers many a Spiegel feature—such as philosopher Jasper's new book, which argues that the West German democratic constitution of 1949 has already given way to "party oligarchy" and that the next step is dictatorship.

Augstein thinks so, too, but he is a disarmingly cheerful pessimist, engagingly gleeful in his despairing comments on his country and compatriots.

"We are under no official pressure whatsoever," he told a visitor last week, "but that is not the problem here. The whole German atmosphere is wrong for the press. We don't have a democratic tradition of many decades, let alone centuries, and the bureaucracy—especially the military bureaucracy—still regards the press as the enemy. Besides, a press can only be as free as it wants to be, and most of our journalists tend to be too timid, respectful, conformist."

### The Press Monopoly

**"T**HEN, OF COURSE, there is the increasing concentration: 40 per cent or so of the newspaper readers in the hands of Axel Springer. Very dangerous, especially since he seems to be getting more right wing and nationalistic year by year.

will be lucky to prevent him from tak-

ing over television as well, or at least there are a few other private channels so there will be some competition. Certainly the political parties are ready to give him anything, and we don't have any antitrust law the way you do to break up monopolies.

"Sure, there is an anticartel office, but that is utterly powerless, a fig leaf to disguise the very essence of our famous neocapitalism—which is that anyone can accumulate as much money and power as possible, no matter what the damage to the rest of society. The bureaucracy's motto is still that quiet is the highest duty, just as in the Kaiser's time."

"Maybe if there had been a Communist dictatorship for a while in 1919, the old system could have been smashed, but I don't see much chance of it now. There are no groups or classes in this country willing to fight for radical democratic ideas and most of the younger politicians, particularly in the CDU, are even worse than the old ones."

"Everyone says we are harsher on the Social Democrats than on the government, and it's true. With the socialists, you can at least have some slight influence. With the government, it's hopeless. Erhard wouldn't even understand what we were talking about."

"The tragedy is that the entire West German system keeps evolving in such a way as to make reunification more

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and more difficult, even if the Russians were ever to permit it. Not that very many people here really care about reunification at all. If it were not for Berlin, they would have forgotten about it long ago. As it is, the shootings at the Wall every week disturb their bad consciences.

"I don't believe for a moment in all this nonsense about the new nationalism here, or the demand for atomic weapons. That's all built up by the Bonn officials for the benefit of you Americans—not an ounce of truth in it. It is impossible to overestimate the apathy, the nonpolitical nature of today's Germany. The people just don't care about any of these things.

"The old nationalism is completely dead. No schoolboy today pays the slightest attention to the Oder-Neisse Line the way we worried about the Polish Corridor.

"Are they democrats? Who really knows without a test? I couldn't vouch for what anyone would do if there were a big economic crisis. But that will never happen. A Chinese banker in Hong Kong told me that every time the living standard in Indonesia rises 1/10 of 1 per cent, he and a score of his friends become millionaires. With two billion people in the undeveloped countries, Europe and America have a permanently expanding market to make themselves richer and richer.

"So you see," Augstein concluded with obvious delight, "it's hopeless."

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